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PP RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #1893/01 3360748
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 020748Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9394
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RHMFIISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001893

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/SPG, S/CRS, AF SE NATSIOS
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU
SUBJECT: ALEX DE WAAL ON SUDAN

REFERENCE: KHARTOUM 1888

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Sudan expert Alex de Waal told poloff on November 28 his thoughts on the current situation in Sudan. De Waal cautioned that the international community should not expect an immediate success with the UNAMID deployment, and that the situation in Darfur has turned from genocide into anarchy. De Waal said that President Bashir makes statements based on his audience and that presidential advisor Nafie Ali Nafie told him that the U.S. still wants regime change in Sudan. End summary.

PROSPECTS FOR UNAMID: IT WILL BE A MESS

¶2. (SBU) Asked about the current African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) transition to a hybrid force under joint AMIS and UN command, de Waal said, "it will be a mess," adding that it will take as long as 12 months for them to be deployed, and "its effectiveness won't change much even if fully deployed." He said that the use of civilian police, who are on the front lines in dealing with civilians and rebels both, offer the best chance for a durable peace in Darfur. He lamented the over-emphasis on military personnel, saying that what is needed is a "hard headed New York City cop" to instill order at the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. As for peacekeeping overall, an informed civilian liaison officer, is "worth a battalion of soldiers."

¶3. (SBU) De Waal had just returned from a week long trip in Darfur and described the IDP camps as an urban environment complete with bicycle repair shops and even a town center complete with brick buildings. He said that IDPs cultivate crops by day and return to the IDP camps for the night. This environment, coupled with the availability of weapons and lack of law and order, has fostered the "criminalization of IDP camps."

GENOCIDE TURNS TO ANARCHY

¶4. (SBU) De Waal said that characterizing Darfur as a war is no longer true; the government's use of surrogates such as the Janjaweed has changed. The outdated view that the Janjaweed are killing African tribes "doesn't really work anymore," said De Waal.

¶5. (SBU) The Sudanese army is weak by design to forestall any coups, so the National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) was assigned the task of arming the surrogates, de Waal explained. When the militias were no longer needed, it was the army and not the NISS which was given the task to disarm them. Aside from the army being the less capable force, they had no central militia commander to deal with. In the end, opined De Waal, these numerous armed groups coupled with the destruction of the social fabric phase transitioned from genocide to the current anarchaic phase with no force capable

of keeping order.

FUTURE HOTSPOTS

¶6. (SBU) Asked if he saw Kordofan as being a future hotspot, de Waal said that the recent Sudan Armed Forces offensive was successful in sealing off South Kordofan from Darfur, "so it went from being a certain future source of unrest to only a probable future source." De Waal saw danger from the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) forces which had not withdrawn from the Nuba mountains, contrary to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). He said that most Nubans believe they will be able to vote to join the south, but they won't and it has not been properly explained to them. Finally, de Waal said that the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) has used its oil revenues and engaged in "retail politics" to successfully recruit 5,000 militiamen from the Messiriya and Rizeigat tribes to their side (the so-called Duhav and Abu Matariq Forces). He added that the National Congress Party (NCP) has gone along with this based on their assumption that the NCP could buy them back later with a bigger salary (Nafie told us as much in October). Now the question remains, what will become of the remaining 25,000 armed Messiriya who were not chosen for the SPLA.

¶7. (SBU) Turning to the current NCP-SPLM impasse, de Waal said that the SPLM's plan A is a political plan to work with the CPA, but its plan B is to return to war, and it is unclear if this "means a war of succession or a march on Khartoum." He said any North-South war would be fought with money, used to buy the service of militias. De Waal wondered out loud whether the NCP's agreement to the SPLA's absorbing the 5,000 Messeriya fighters was a smart tactical move, as their loyalty is probably open to the highest bidder. As far as solving the current NCP-SPLM impasse over Abyei, de Waal said it might be solved if they approached Abyei as a local issue and agreed

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to share grazing rights and land with "soft borders" and separately solve the oil issue.

UNDERSTANDING BASHIR

¶8. (SBU) De Waal said that Bashir tailors his remarks based on his audience. For example, to understand Bashir's bellicose statements before the Popular Defense Force (PDF) on November 17, it helps to remember that the PDF was created by Islamists, and that many, including Bashir's potential rival Hassan al-Turabi, were in the audience. In a number of ways, Bashir is intimidated by the PDF and wanted to say something that would ensure their loyalty to his regime.

NAFIE: U.S. WANTS REGIME CHANGE

¶9. (SBU) De Waal said that he had just had a meeting with hardliner presidential advisor Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie, who expressed concern for U.S.-Sudanese relations. According to De Waal, Nafie said that he was convinced that there is a U.S. conspiracy for a regime change. Nafie asked de Waal if this was true, who replied that there are probably diverse opinions in the U.S. with Congress probably wanting a regime change but others such as U.S. intelligence agencies wanting to keep the status quo. Nafie asked de Waal if that meant there was a "division of opinion or a division of labor."

¶10. (SBU) Nafie complained to De Waal that there is no advantage to conceding to any U.S. demands, "we signed the CPA and got nothing in return." De Waal opined that Nafie's status has risen within the NCP and his point of view has been vindicated while moderates such as Vice President Taha have been marginalized. According to de Waal, Nafie (and many in the government) believe that "they managed to live in isolation from the world before, and can do it again."

¶11. (SBU) Comment: De Waal readily gives his opinion on Sudanese politics based on research and first hand impressions. He told us the Sudanese authorities have become more willing to grant him a visa, which makes us wonder if the Sudanese see him a possible

critic of the west and therefore useful to them. De Waal has publicly clashed with the even more anti-regime John Prendergast in a widely circulated debate recently. Nonetheless, his thoughts on the success of UNAMID and possible hotspots, while we take with a grain of salt, we believe are worth noting.

FERNANDEZ